

RESOLUTIONS

OF

THE LEGISLATURE OF GEORGIA,

IN RELATION TO

The difficulties between the authorities of the States of South Carolina and Louisiana and those of the State of Massachusetts.

FEBRUARY 2, 1846.

Ordered to lie on the table, and be printed.

IN SENATE.

The attention of the committee on the state of the republic has been particularly directed to the memorial or declaration of the general assembly of the commonwealth of Massachusetts, in relation to the difficulties which have originated between the authorities of that State and those of South Carolina and Louisiana; and while they regret the occasion which so imperiously calls upon Georgia, as one of the sister States deeply and gravely interested in the results, to avow her solemn convictions of the merits of the controversy, they nevertheless feel it to be their bounden duty to speak out freely and frankly upon this as upon all other questions involving a mutual feeling and reciprocity of interest among the sister States of this Union.

And although we do not feel warranted, nor deem it necessary at the present, to enter upon an elaborate argument of the questions at issue between the authorities of the commonwealth of Massachusetts and the States aggrieved, we, however, feel bound now to declare our most perfect concurrence in and adherence to a precept of government upon which South Carolina and Louisiana have predicated their defence and justification, and involving the principles which we are pleased to see that Massachusetts herself, by her proper authorities, in her memorial, sanctions, to wit: that "if there be any force in the concurring sentiments of all authorities upon the nature and end of government, there is no principle more clear than this—that it is the indispensable duty of a State to do everything within its power that may protect its members against wrong."

This principle we most willingly and unreservedly adopt as the rule of our action, and upon this are willing to take issue in common with our sister States against the course adopted by the authorities of the commonwealth of Massachusetts. The question whether *free negroes* should be considered in the light of citizens or not, is one that the constitution fixes, and the States may determine for themselves; one, too, which the State

authorities long since have determined. It is enough, however, to advert to the fact, that the States of South Carolina and Louisiana, in the exercise of their sovereign rights, have determined and published to the world long since, that they did not regard them as citizens, of which the authorities of Massachusetts could not have been ignorant at the time of her aggressions. The people of South Carolina, Louisiana, Georgia, as well as all the States, claim the right of thinking for themselves. And with due regard for the opinions of mankind, in the highest respect, for "the comity acknowledged by all civilized communities as the rule of conduct toward one another," we ask, what else could South Carolina and Louisiana have been expected to do under the circumstances? And how else could they have discharged the high obligations which they owed to their offended citizens, when their peace and safety were almost daily endangered by the machinations of unscrupulous emissaries, operating secretly, though actively, under the pretence and guise of business occupations? Could South Carolina and Louisiana, and should Georgia, remain unmindful of the high and paramount obligation of self-protection, when the peace, harmony, and lives of their citizens are menaced? And have not the States the right to adopt, within the pale of the federal constitution, such means of prevention and defence as they in their wisdom may deem necessary and proper? If they have not, then have we entered the solemn compact in vain—and vain our appeal to that hallowed instrument, or the laws of nations, for redress.

We, the people of the slaveholding States, claim nothing but what we believe to be essential, vitally necessary for the protection of our peace, property, and lives—nothing but what we conscientiously believe is guaranteed to us by the compromises of the federal constitution, and nothing, the acquiescence in which can be derogatory to the welfare, or tarnish the dignity or honor of any sister State of the confederacy.

The people of the State of Georgia cherish a deep and unabated devotion to the Union of the States, and the inestimable blessings of our happy institutions; and, for the perpetuity of the peace and harmony which they so anxiously desire to promote, they pledge to their sister States and to the world their solemn faith, that they will, for the future, as they have heretofore done, conform to the principle which exacts nothing but what is strictly right, nor submits to any thing that is evidently wrong.

Be it therefore resolved, That the course pursued by the States of South Carolina and Louisiana, in the recent instances in which the commonwealth of Massachusetts had manifested a disposition, by sending a special agent into those States, to interfere with their sovereign rights and constitutional domestic legislation, has met our most sincere commendation, and merits and will receive our most hearty co-operation, should a similar indignity be offered to the sovereignty and safety of our own or any other sister State of the Union.

And be it further resolved, That his excellency the governor be requested to transmit copies of these resolutions to our Senators and Representatives in Congress, and the executives of the several States.

Agreed to December 23, 1845.

ABSALOM H. CHAPPELL,

President of the Senate.

Attest: THOS. R. R. COBB,

Secretary of the Senate.

IN HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Read and concurred in, December 24, 1845.

CHARLES J. JENKINS,

Speaker of the House of Representatives.

Attest: JOHN J. WORD,

Clerk of the House of Representatives.

Assented to, December 29th, 1845.

GEO. W. CRAWFORD, *Governor.*

IN HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Read and approved by the House of Representatives

CHAMBERLAIN J. HENNING

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